November 7, 1971

Dear Jim,

Many thanks for your letter of the 3rd. Under the circumstances I won't complain to Sprague myself. I agree that it may be better not to push for any kind of retraction. If you do get to see any future articles before publication, and they involve Archives-type material which I might be more familiar with than you, I would be glad to throw in my opinions (confidentially, of course).

About the infamous F.B.I. memo: in a letter of 2/4/69 to Jon Rothchild in Garrison's office, I noted that on 11/15/63 the F.B.I. advised the Secret Service in San Antonio concerning a reported assassination plot by members of the National States Rights Party (17.566). We also know that the F.B.I. was aware of the Lami tape. So, I expect that the F.B.I. clerk may have seen a F.B.I. that warned of a possible assassination attempt but which had nothing at all to do with Oswald.

I pointed this out to Sprague after his first [redacted] article. His reply to my query about what evidence he had was a statement given to Lane and Garrison by the clerk. I recall seeing Lane's affidavit on this matter, probably in your files somewhere; I remember specifically that it did not indicate that Lane had or had seen a copy of the F.B.I.

Thanks for your comments on the Hoffenthaler and other books; I guess I'll save my money for a while. I have gotten Navasky's book on F.B.I.'s Justice Department; it isn't directly relevant but appears to be a very good and perceptive book, especially about how the F.B.I. works with outsiders.

I was very pleased to get Sylvia's article. I have written her a brief note passing on my high opinion of her work. (We have not corresponded for almost a year.) Unfortunately, it is hard to compete with the sensationalists. Melin's reply was amazing! I know that a good lawyer would take that approach in a situation before a jury if he had no case, but I was startled to see it in print.

You mentioned a possible Freedom of Information suit on Bonilas. All I have on him is the extensive material in Photographic Aftermath (pp. 7 ff., pp. 212 ff.) Also, the original Canadian Press report in the WC of 11/22/63, p. 5 (enclosed). Admittedly the reporter could have garbled things, but it is hard for me to believe, from that report, that Bonilas actually witnessed the assassination itself. (He was in the general vicinity, I would say.) How would you sue - that is, who is supposed to have the Bonilas photo(s)? Sprague sent me (in May 1970) a letter he had written Hoover, [redacted] via the F.B.I. I do not recall any evidence for that. Without good evidence to the contrary, I would guess that the photos used in the Liberty article were not really Bonilas'. Wasn't he supposed to have given all his photos to the newspaper person who lost them? (My memory is foggy. I assume that this will be checked out, and the proper groundwork laid, before any suit is filed.)

Sincerely,

Paul

cc: ✓, [redacted], JFK

PS: You sent me 2 copies of Sylvia's letter of 9/20 to Melin, and none of her letter of 9/7. Please send it, if you can find it easily.